



Public television programs educate viewers about preparedness

Public television stations throughout the state recently aired two special programs designed to educate Hoosiers on bioterrorism preparedness efforts in Indiana, and to provide them with information on how they can be better prepared for a crisis.

The first program, *Living with the Threat*, took viewers through five months of training and exercises, culminating with a full-scale exercise in May responding to a mock bioterrorism attack in Lafayette.

Working in partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health, WFYI Public Television camera crews were granted special permission to capture behind-the-scenes footage of exercises designed to evaluate plans for the receipt and distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile.

The Strategic National Stockpile is a supply of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies under federal control that can be requested and used by



Stillframe by Nathaniel Beaver

Gabe Nunez and Cynthia Grandia, Public Health Preparedness, are shown working at an exercise during the documentary "Living With the Threat."

a state during a bio-terrorism attack, natural disaster, or other public health emergency.

The crews also conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with officials from the State Department of Health and state and local agencies that would respond to an act of bio-terrorism.

The program examined the overarching issue of testing the state's

preparedness to receive and distribute Strategic National Stockpile materials in the event of a large-scale bioterrorism attack.

It also drilled down to look at preparedness efforts at the individual level, including the work of ISDH Field Epidemiologist Sandy Gorsuch, Public Health Nurse Donella Carter,

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Physical activity is the message at the Indiana State Fair

This year at the Indiana State Fair, the Indiana State Department of Health booth has been dedicated to the promotion of physical activity as a means to improve health and quality of life.

Fair visitors have the opportunity to use pedometers while walking around the fairgrounds. The goal is for fairgoers to have the opportunity to see how pedometers work, as well as to receive a chance to make the daily top 10 walkers list.



Photo by Dan Axler

In addition to walking, the booth also touts other forms of activity, like cycling, swimming, and other sports. Visitors learn that increasing daily activity can have a significant impact

on their chances of developing harmful conditions, and can improve their daily well-being. Through this direct interaction it is hoped that participants will be encouraged to increase the amount of physical activity that they do each day.

Many ISDH employees have offered to help staff the booth over the 12-day fair. Volunteers have the opportunity to interact with Hoosiers, while promoting a positive message to State Fair visitors.

— Eric Neuburger

Weight Watchers offers staff at-work program

Jeanne Hogan, Finance, loves to mow her grass. In fact, she has to beat her husband to the lawn mower so she can mow. A few years ago, mowing the grass was not high on her list of things to do. Today is a different story.

To Hogan, mowing means exercise. And exercise combined with her Weight Watchers program means maintaining her goal weight – and keeping off the 50 pounds she has lost since May 2001.

The program

The 13-week Weight Watchers at Work program began at the State Department of Health in 2000, and is entering its 20th series, said Hogan.

Different from most weight management plans, the program is based on a point system – assigning food a point value based on calories, fat, and fiber. Participants – based on their weight – are advised on the number of points to consume daily.

Weekly meetings led by a Weight Watchers instructor include themed discussion – such as “how to handle eating at pitch-ins and on vacations,” a weigh-in, participant success stories and struggles, and a general support group. Most, like Hogan, bring a brown bag lunch to the sessions.

Once a goal weight is reached and maintained for six weeks, participants become life members and can attend sessions at no charge.

“You don’t have to give up your



Photo by Dan Axler

(Left to right) Karen Sanders, Carolyn Givens, and Jeanne Hogan, Finance, have all found success in the Weight Watchers at Work program. All three are participating in the next session, which begins this month.

evenings or weekends to attend a Weight Watchers meeting,” said Hogan.

It takes commitment

“Weight Watchers is not a cure-all,” said Hogan. “You have to commit to the lifestyle change – eating healthy, exercising, and drinking plenty of water. If you adhere to the plan, you should have success.”

And to Karen Sanders, Finance, weight loss has meant success to her in many ways.

Half-way to her goal weight, Sanders has already lowered her cholesterol and blood pressure to within normal ranges for the first time in 10 years.

“I want to be healthier,” she said of her reasoning for joining the program on April 27, 2004. “My goal is to get off my cholesterol and blood pressure

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Weight Watchers At Work

► The next Weight Watchers at Work registration will be:

Tuesday, August 24

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Human Resources Training Room, second floor

► For more information, contact Jeanne Hogan at jhogan@isdh.state.in.us

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Protect yourself against identity theft

In order to protect yourself from identity theft, or if you believe you may be a victim of identity theft, the following information is suggested from law enforcement:

▷ The next time you order checks, have only your initials (instead of first name), and last name put on them. If someone takes your check book, they will not know if you sign your checks with just your initials or your first name. Your bank will know how you sign your check.

▷ When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the "FOR" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number. Anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to all your complete account number.

▷ Put your work phone number on your checks instead of your home phone number. If you have a PO Box, use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address.

▷ Never have your Social Security number printed on your checks. You can add it if it is necessary, but if you have it printed, anyone can get it

▷ Keep or destroy all ATM withdrawal slips. Do not just throw them away

▷ Photocopy both sides of all licenses, credit cards, etc. Then you will know what you had in your wallet, and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. Also carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling either here or abroad.

Look for more "Identity Theft Guidelines" in the next issue of *The Express*.



Agency sponsors obesity workshops

The State Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Division recently sponsored training in various Indiana cities on adolescent obesity.

"Weight Growth and Bright Futures for Maternal and Child Health Families" focused on obesity in relation to nutrition, physical activity, and BMI (body mass index), according to Larry Nelson, Maternal and Child Health. The featured speakers were Barbara J. Mayfield, M.S., R.D., president and founder of Noteworthy Creations, Inc.; and Pamela R. Estes, M.S., R.D., C.D., a nutrition consultant with Pre Enterprises.

"We wanted to give the participants practical tools to help them attack the obesity problem," said Nelson.

The training addressed the benefits of, and process of calculating, BMIs, which Nelson described as "quick, easy and standardized." Several case studies were used in demonstrating how growth charts are used with BMIs.

The "Bright Futures" program guidelines for nutrition and physical activity, generated by Georgetown University, were also discussed.

Overall, 260 participants attended in Chesterton, Elkhart, Indianapolis, Muncie, and Scottsburg. Attendees included medical students, social workers, university officials, community health center employees, nutritionists, nurses, among others. A sixth training session is scheduled for October 12 in the Evansville area.

"For some, this was a starting point. For others, this was reinforcement," said Nelson. "They can take this information and use what is good for their individual communities."

For more information on the October 12 session in the Evansville area, contact Nelson at nelson@isdh.state.in.us.

Immunization conferences set for October

On October 4 and 8, the State Department of Health's Immunization Program will host the Annual Fall Awards Conferences at two sites in Indianapolis.

Providers who have above 95 percent immunization coverage levels will receive a plaque, and those with 90-95 percent coverage levels will receive a certificate.

Christopher Belcher, M.D. will speak on "Vaccine Myths and Misunderstandings," and Mercy Obeime, M.D. will discuss "Immunization Issues in Africa." The two guest speakers will also participate in an "Ask the Expert" panel.

The day-long, free conference offered on two dates will also include a continental breakfast, lunch, a poster exhibition, and door prizes. Break-out sessions will cover such topics as "Immunizations 101," "Influenza,"

"Pneumococcal Disease," and "Indiana Immunization Registry."

Conference dates and locations:
(Participants will register for one.)

Monday, October 4

◆ 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Indianapolis Marriott North
3645 River Crossing Parkway
Indianapolis

Friday, October 8

◆ 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Primo South Banquet and
Conference Center
2615 E. National Ave.
Indianapolis

For more information, or to register, contact Shannon Goheen at smgoheen@hotmail.com, or Jennifer McCarthy at jen_dolphin79@hotmail.com. Information is also available by visiting <http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/immunization/events.htm>.

WEIGHT WATCHERS: Three share success stories

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medications.”

She also is wearing smaller-sized clothing – something she has not done in five years. “When people come up to me and say ‘You’re losing weight and you look great,’ that is what keeps me going,” she said.

Sanders admits it is harder to keep on top of her points on the weekends because of the different routine, but is comforted by the flexibility of the Weight Watchers plan. “You can still have a splurge,” she said.

Hogan likes that she can eat all sorts of foods – including her favorite low-fat ice cream. “I still have my favorite foods,” she said adding that the Weight Watchers plan promotes eating good foods in the right portions.

Watching another Weight Watchers member and co-worker – Carolyn Giv-

ens, Finance– succeed in the program was also an inspiration to Sanders.

A member since January 14, 2004, and at her goal weight after losing 47 pounds, Givens joined the program for her health. She has since gone from a “snug” size 18 to a size 8-10.

“I’m a breast cancer survivor, and need to keep my weight under control,” she said.

Participating in the program at work has made it easier, she said. “There is always someone here to talk to on a daily basis,” she said adding that her favorite part of the meetings is when the group talks about obstacles they have overcome.

Lasting Effects

To Givens, Hogan and Sanders, the Weight Watchers program has made a difference in their lives.

Givens said losing weight has meant a boost in her self-confidence. “I feel much more comfortable with my overall health in general,” she said.

It’s a family affair for Hogan and her husband Kevin, who has lost nearly 30 pounds. “It’s a win-win situation for our family,” she said of the support she receives from Kevin. “We both enjoy our new lifestyle.”

Sanders describes it as a gift she is giving her family.

“It’s a gift knowing that you are reducing your risks for heart attack and stroke,” said Sanders. “And letting them know that you will live to be with them longer, and hopefully not be a burden to them due to poor health problems caused by years of not watching what we eat.”

Fathers encouraged to support breastfeeding

The State Department of Health’s Office of Minority Health is reaching out to fathers during its “Fathers Supporting Breastfeeding” meetings in Indianapolis.

The campaign, which began August 5, offers fathers of breastfeed babies an opportunity to learn how they can help breastfeeding moms, said Tasha Smith-Bonds, program coordinator with the Office of Minority Health.

“Our purpose is the encourage

them, and offer them tips on how to support breastfeeding moms,” said Smith-Bonds.

Led by a lactation consultant, discussions include why fathers should encourage moms to breastfeed, a cost comparison of breastfeeding and formula-feeding, and how fathers can participate in breastfeeding.

“We have received positive feedback from the fathers who attended the first session,” said Smith-Bonds.

Sessions are held at the Fathers and Family Resource/Research Center, 2835 Illinois Street from 6 to 8 p.m. Upcoming sessions include September 2 and 16; and October 7 and 21.

Admission is free, and fathers can attend as many sessions as they like. Mothers are invited, but are not able to participate in the discussions.

For more information, contact Smith-Bonds at tbonds@isdh.state.in.us or by calling 233-7453.

Television

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and Emergency Response Coordinator Angie Honeywell from the Tippecanoe County Health Department.

Footage from the exercises also captured the efforts of mental health experts, law enforcement officers, and emergency medical technicians as they responded to the mock attack.

The second program, *Mommy, I’m Scared: Children and Community Crises*, examined the psychological

impact that an unexpected crisis can have on children.

Distinguished Indiana physicians, psychologists, and educators suggested actions that parents and caregivers can take before, during, and after a community emergency in order to help alleviate a child’s distress. The program, which was produced by WTIU Public Television in Bloomington, taught viewers how to acknowledge a child’s fears while communicating with them in a reassuring, yet honest manner.

Both programs were funded with bioterrorism preparedness grant money from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A total of eight Public Television Stations aired the programs.

Copies of the first programs are being sent to local health departments, local emergency management agencies, hospitals, and mental health organizations. The second program is being distributed to schools throughout the state.

— Andy Zirkle